

REMARKS

The Examiner's careful review and examination of the subject application are noted and appreciated. Upon entry of the present amendment, claim 1 has been amended and claim 45 has been added. No new matter has been introduced with this amendment. Support for the amendment to claim 1 can be found on page 7, lines 16-17 of the original specification. Support for new claim 45 can be found on page 8, lines 1-3 of the original specification.

Applicants have carefully reviewed the above-identified Office Action. Applicants submit that, in view of the amendments and clarifying remarks set forth herein, all bases of objection and rejection have been overcome. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the pending rejections and allowance of the claims submitted.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC 112

The Examiner has rejected claim 21, stating "after sulfuric acid begins reacting with said bulk nickel metal producing" is new matter. The above limitation has been removed from amended claim 21. However, the above limitation has been added in dependant claim 45. The limitation is supported in page 8, lines 1-3 of the original specification. Thus, removal of the rejection under 35 USC 112 is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejection of claims 21-38, 40-43 under 35 USC 103(a) over United States Patent 1,936,829 (Corson)

Applicants' amended claim 1 teaches supplying sulfuric acid at a first pressure exceeding ambient pressure. Corson does not teach or suggest this limitation.

Corson teaches adding Monel, sulfuric acid, and water to a steel cylinder, to form a mixture and subsequently adding compressed air and steam to the mixture. (See Corson page 1, lines 76-109 and page 2, lines 18 -40) Corson contains no teachings directed to supplying sulfuric acid at a pressure exceeding ambient pressure. Instead, the Corson reference only teaches supplying sulfuric acid at ambient pressure.

To establish *prima facie* obviousness of a claimed invention, all the claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art. (MPEP 2143)

Since Corson does not teach or suggest Applicants' required limitation of supplying sulfuric acid at a first pressure exceeding ambient pressure, Corson does not teach or suggest each and every claim limitation of Applicants' claimed invention. Therefore, Applicants' claim 1 along with all claims dependent thereon are nonobvious over the cited reference.

Thus, reconsideration and removal of the rejection under 35 USC 103(a) is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejection of claims 44 under 35 USC 103(a) over United States Patent 1,936,829 (Corson) in view of United States Patent 4,201,648 (Subramanian)

For the reasons stated above, Applicants' amended claim 1 is nonobvious over Corson. Further, Subramanian does not rectify the deficiencies of Corson in that Subramanian does not teach or suggest supplying sulfuric acid at a first pressure exceeding ambient pressure.


Since the cited combination does not teach or suggest Applicants' required limitation of supplying sulfuric acid at a first pressure exceeding ambient pressure, the

cited combination does not teach or suggest each and every claim limitation of Applicants' claimed invention. Therefore, Applicants' claim 1 along with all claims dependent thereon are nonobvious over the cited combination.

Thus, reconsideration and removal of the rejection under 35 USC 103(a) is respectfully requested.

Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of all outstanding rejections and respectfully submit that the application stands in condition for allowance. If the Examiner has any questions or suggestions regarding this amendment, the Examiner is respectfully asked to contact Applicants' representative at the telephone number or email address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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